



**PRESS RELEASE
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CHAIRMAN DAN BURTON EXPRESSES ALARM OVER GROWING TERRORIST TIES IN LATIN AMERICA

(Washington, D.C.) - Today, Congressman Dan Burton [R-IN-05], Chairman of the House International Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, released the following statement on the official visit of the Iranian Majlis Speaker, Gholam Ali-Haddad Adel, who is a close relative of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to Latin America.

"I am very concerned that President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and Communist Dictator Fidel Castro of Cuba, along with other Latin American leaders are reaching out to known Islamic terrorist organizations, such as Hamas, and cozying-up to renowned terrorist-sponsoring nations like Iran and North Korea. Any alliance between terrorist-sponsoring nations and leftist leaders in Latin America will be viewed as a serious and direct threat to the national security of the United States as well as to the World," stated Chairman Burton.

On Sunday, Iranian Speaker Gholam-Ali Haddad Adel began an official visit to Latin America aimed at improving relations and cooperation. His trip is seen as a precursor to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's expected visit to the region this fall, where he will personally thank Venezuela and Cuba for their support of a nuclear-Iran at last month's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meeting.

Iranian President Ahmadinejad has repeatedly appalled the international community with his incendiary remarks, claiming that the atrocity of the Holocaust never occurred and that the Jewish State of Israel should be destroyed.

"Iran is one of the most destabilizing forces in the Middle East and continues to threaten global stability and security. Iran's Ayatollah and President have continuously rebuffed the United Nations time and time again and are now enriching uranium for the end goal of developing a nuclear weapons program, aimed at imperiling the safety and security of the Middle East, Europe, and ultimately the United States," Burton continued.

"The United States needs to do whatever we can to convince leftists leaders in Latin America, including Mr. Chavez and Castro that when they deal with terrorist organizations, such as Hamas, or cooperate with renowned terrorist-sponsoring nations like Iran they are putting themselves and others at risk. I urge them to seriously reconsider their actions and disavow their warming relationships with terrorist nations and organizations immediately," concluded Burton.